

Background

A place where even the soils are rich in history has the potential to yield a culturally fruitful population.

History

HISTORIC SETTLEMENTS

TIJERAS CANYON

About 900 years ago, Native American people lived in Canyon villages, some of which were still occupied when the Spanish arrived. Until recent times, Tijeras Canyon was known as Cañon de Carnué. Through the ages, Tijeras Canyon has been an important travel corridor. In the 17th and 18th centuries, Apache Indians used the Canyon as a passage and campground when they rode west to raid communities along the Rio Grande. Hispanic settlers frequently traveled the Canyon in the 18th century to reach timber forests and hunting and trading areas. Before the Civil War, the Canyon was used in transporting information and military supplies between Albuquerque and Fort Stanton. In 1862, troops from both the Confederate and Union armies occupied it. A Union Army remount station was constructed near Tijeras. In 1868, more than 6,000 Navajo traveled from Ft. Sumner, where they had lived in detention for more than four years, north to Sedillo and then west through the Canyon.

CAÑON DE CARNUÉ GRANT

During the 17th century and first half of the 18th century, no permanent population lived in Tijeras Canyon. In 1763, the Governor of New Mexico under the Spanish crown ordered permanent settlements in Tijeras Canyon to help buffer the larger Albuquerque settlement from Apache and Comanche attacks.

Following the governors demand, a group of landless Hispanic and Mestizos settlers, primarily from Albuquerque, moved to a land grant along Tijeras Canyon that was called Cañon de Carnué. The village they formed was called San Miguel de Laredo and most likely was located near present-day Carnuel. Following an Apache attack in October 1770, the survivors fled back to Albuquerque. They refused to return to their homes at San Miguel and were forced to tear them down in May 1771.

In 1819, allotments were made for two village clusters in Cañon de Carnué. Named for their patron saints, the villages became San Miguel de Laredo, located near the old San Miguel and San Antonio de Padua, located about a mile north of the present intersection of North 14 and I-40. The villages were built around enclosed plazas. Allotments of farmland were made for additional settlers later in 1819 and 1820. The Cañon de Carnué Grant extended north of Tijeras Canyon to include what is now Cañoncito, but did not include the San Antonito area. Indian raids, which sometimes caused settlers to flee, continued into the mid-1860s. Following the removal of the apache threat in 1865, new villages were founded throughout the Canon de Carnue Grant. These villages included: Primera Agua, Gutierrez Canyon, Bartolo Baca, Tablazon, Zamora, Yrisari, Cedro, Well Country Camp/Hobbies, and Carlito Springs.

Between 1819 and 1848 these two villages flourished as self-sustaining agricultural communities. Water from mountain springs, supplemented by floodwaters, was supplied to San Antonio area homes through ditches and log flumes. Residents grew beans, corn, garden vegetables, and sometimes wheat. The poor rocky soil, droughts and early and late frosts meant that primarily only subsistence crops were grown. Mountain pastures were used to raise sheep, goats, and some cattle. Men hunted for meat and hides, and historically hunted buffalo. From the earliest days of the settlement, residents chopped trees and sold the firewood in Albuquerque. Hauling wood in wagons was an important economic activity even as late as 1937.

In 1848, the influx of American pioneers permanently altered the land uses and land management practices of the land grant. Settlement patterns, property tenure, and use of natural resources of the pioneers varied greatly from those of existing Spanish and Mexican settlements. These changes in land use imposed by the pioneers significantly altered the employment of the land grant residents.

In the late nineteenth century, some of the men from the Cañon de Carnué Land Grant worked at mines in Golden and San Pedro and later at the Madrid coal mines. Some worked building railroads and some at sawmills, of which there were many south of the present freeway. Early sawmills could be found at Juan Tomas, David Canyon, Carolino Canyon, Tablazon, Kuhns Road, and a number of other places. Small gold and silver mines were opened within Tijeras Canyon proper. A coalfield, running east of North 14 and north of Interstate-40, was mined from

the 1890s to about 1920. It had the distinction of being the smallest coal seam mined in New Mexico, and one of the smallest developed in either the United States or Europe. In 1908, it employed about four men underground and one outside.

By 1903, after a long period of court proceedings and congressional review, the original 90,000-acre claim of the land grant had been reduced to 2,000 acres. Much of the communal land had been reduced to small, family farm plats. This conversion of land removed the traditional economic base from the community and further changed the employment of the residents.

In the early 1900s, some men worked far from home herding sheep. Later, some worked for the Forest Service. During the Prohibition Era of the 1920s, the manufacture and sale of bootleg whiskey to Albuquerque residents was a major business enterprise for the Tijeras Canyon communities. After the Second World War, when roads and transportation had improved, some residents commuted to work at Sandia Labs and the greater Albuquerque area.

HISTORIC VILLAGES

SAN ANTONIO

Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, San Antonio was the population and religious center of the Cañon de Carnué Land Grant. Early development of a water system based on flows from San Antonio Spring encouraged people to cluster in the vicinity of San Antonio.

Charles Campos, an Italian who became a prominent member of the San Antonio community, purchased land at San Antonio in the 1880s. Located about a quarter-mile northeast of the church, the land included part of San Antonio's ruined second plaza (called the "Old Plaza"). Campos' home eventually included a dance hall, saloon, and store. The house was built over a well, and water was pumped into the kitchen. The Campos home was sold in 1930, but the dance hall remained open until it was torn down in the mid-40s. Campos pressed the grapes that grew behind his home and kept the wine in barrels stored in a cellar beneath his kitchen and dance hall. Wine-making was common among residents of the area. Campos ran several other businesses. He mined gypsum near Cañoncito and had limestone kilns at several East Mountain locations. Some of the kilns still exist, including one in the Tijeras area. Campos sold the burned limestone and probably also the gypsum in Albuquerque, where it was used for plaster. The gypsum was used by local families to make a whitewash with which women would paint the inner walls of their homes. Women also purchased burned limestone from Campos, which they used to soak corn with overnight so that the kernels would soften.

From the mid-1830s until 1880, the only church serving the Cañon de Carnué Land Grant (Tijeras Canyon) area was at San Antonio. The San Antonio chapel, built of stone, was constructed at the site of a third San Antonio plaza and over the ruins of an Indian pueblo. The first two plazas at San Antonio either had been abandoned or were not large enough to accommodate everyone. The small church burned down in the 1950s and a larger San Antonio de Padua Church was built.

Religion played a central role in community life. In the 1880s, a priest blessed a penitente morada located north of the San Antonio church. The morada was founded by Dario Gutierrez, with the help of Dario Chavez. The penitentes, a lay Catholic brotherhood, held observances at the morada throughout the Lenten season. People from Santa Fe, Mora, Chimayo, Socorro, San Juan and Belen came to visit the morada during Lent. For three days of Holy Week, Wednesday through Friday, the penitentes lived at the morada day and night. The morada apparently burned in the early 1940s, and was torn down. Only a few stones remain. However, there is the still-definable site of a large cross (representing Calvary), where the penitentes held special observances.

San Antonio's fiesta is held in June. Masked matachines dancers have been an integral part of the fiesta since some time in the last century. The San Antonio/Tijeras Canyon area also, until about the 1960s, celebrated and prayed for rain on St. John the Baptist Day, June 24th. A procession, with statues from the San Antonio church, traveled from San Antonio to Tijeras, Primera Agua, Rincon Loop and back to San Antonio.

CARNUEL

Although 24 families had settled at San Miguel (Carnuel) in 1819, by 1880 there were only 10. Most of the population had gravitated toward San Antonio, where a water supply had been developed.

Two chapels were built in Carnuel in the 1890s. A private chapel was built by Domingo Garcia to house the statue of San Miguel de Laredo, the village's patron saint. It was torn down in the 1960s. Carnuel's community church, Santo Niño, was built in 1898 at the west end of Carnuel, on land donated by Ramon and Petra Herrera. The original stone church was enlarged with stone and adobe, then in the 1960s it was torn down and a larger church built. In 1932, Father Libertine erected the large white cross on the hill across the freeway from the church. The Father's idea was to encourage travelers through the canyon to stop and meditate.

Even today, residents still commemorate these special events. Carnuel observes a San Miguel fiesta every September. Each year on May 3, a Triumph of the Cross fiesta the fiesta of Santo Niño are celebrated together. Prior to construction of the Interstate, a religious procession walked from the church to the cross on the hill.

TIJERAS

The Tijeras area was settled shortly after San Antonio. In 1880, with 15 families, it was the second-most densely populated community of Cañon de Carnué. Tijeras, meaning "scissors" in Spanish, was so named because the major roads, north-south and east-west, came together like scissors.

An Immaculate Conception Church occupied the white adobe building in 1912. Between 1912 and 1930 the property, which was a simple square room, belonged to the Archdiocese of Santa Fe. However, at some point within that period, church use of the building stopped, and in 1930 the property reverted to its original owners, the Keleher family. Around 1935, Tijeras residents apparently appropriated the building for church use again, naming the church Santo Niño. In later years, an altar was added, and then a sacristy. The property again was given to the Archdiocese in 1963, and eventually became the property of the Village of Tijeras. The old Santo Niño church is not in use and is intended to become a museum. A new, larger church was built in the early 1970s.

Part of the old wall has been rebuilt across from the old church, south of Historic Route 66. Constructed in front of the former Carpenter home and dance hall, it originally stood higher and protected the wagons of those who came to dance.

Across from the present wall, on the north side of Historic Route 66, another high wall once stood in front of another dance hall, home, store and post office, all owned by Jose Dominguez, an Italian. Dominguez had a well and hand pump in the middle of his corral, where people watered their horses. They also stopped there overnight when traveling through Tijeras Canyon and slept in their wagons. The stagecoach stopped near Dominguez's buildings.

In September, Tijeras celebrates its Holy Child fiesta.

CAÑONCITO

Cañoncito was known as "El Cañoncito de Nuanes" in 1826, although it was uninhabited at that time. In 1860, a Salvador Nuanes and his sons lived in Cañoncito, which had a population of 29 families. By 1880, Cañoncito's population had dropped to 12 families.

Water was supplied from Cole Spring through ditches and dugout log flumes. The water was stored in a large pond beside the village, from which it was distributed. Cañoncito's San Lorenzo Church was built in the 1870s. The feast day of the patron saint, San Lorenzo, is celebrated in August.

Gypsum was mined near Cañoncito by Charles Campos, and later by the Ideal Cement Company. Flagstone also was obtained from an area near Cañoncito. It was used in the floor of Albuquerque's old airport building and in the floors of several University of New Mexico buildings during the 1930s.

SAN ANTONITO

The San Antonito Grant was settled in 1844. Water for gardens and domestic use was supplied by a ditch running from La Cienego.

Although the name “San Antonito” borders the church gate and the church is referred to as “La Santa Cruz” (Holy Cross), members of two families have said the church’s real name is “Nuestro Señor de Mapimi”. Señor de Mapimi refers to the statue of the crucified Jesus which probably came from Mapimi, Mexico and is the community’s patron. The statue was stolen in the 1970s. Now a smaller crucifix is taken out on processions for the church’s September 23 fiesta. Fiestas generally were held after the bean crop was harvested and sold.

The numbers “7 27 21” above the church doorway represent a date, but the two San Antonito families say the church was built much earlier than 1921. One person said that was the date the church was plastered. The church was built of adobe, and before 1921 had been coated annually with a mixture of mud and straw. Another version has it that in 1921 the church was enlarged.



*Historic
San Antonito
Church*

SEDILLO

In 1819, Esteban Sedillo was given land in Tijeras Canyon east of present-day Tijeras. Soon afterward, the Sedillos moved east to the place now named Sedillo for them. Sedillo apparently had two daughters.

The village’s rock San Isidro Church was built in 1941. It replaced a small, older church that was torn down. The community celebrates San Isidro’s May 15 fiesta, and also celebrates a fiesta for Santa Anna and Santiago in July. The latter observance involves a procession from San Antonio and an all-night prayer vigil. On May 3, there is an all-night Holy Cross observance. May 3 is commemorated as the date community members struck water in a well they were digging. The well, on Jacobo Baca’s property, served as the community well until his death. Earlier, residents had obtained water from a well two or three miles distant.

CHILILI

Chilili once was an Indian pueblo. A small Franciscan mission was built there around 1614. The pueblo was abandoned between 1669 and 1676 because of Apache attacks. Ruins of the Indian pueblo lie on the west side of the Arroyo de Chilili.



La Capilla De San Juan Nepomoseno-

farmed. In the early part of the century, men also worked at a local sawmill and on a pipeline that went through the village. An old store, built early in the century, is still open. Community residents sold produce at the store and also bought needed provisions.

A small Spanish settlement was colonized north of the original pueblo in the early nineteenth century, but was abandoned because of drought. About 20 families moved to the ruins of the old pueblo, and in 1841 obtained a land grant from the Mexican government.

The Chilili church is called La Capilla de San Juan Nepomoseno. It is said to have been built in 1842. The nave is constructed of adobe; the altar area and a side room are constructed of stone, which was covered with mud. Graves at the side of the church date from 1873 to 1883. San Juan Nepomoseno's fiesta is celebrated in August. An active penitente brotherhood existed in Chilili until the morada burned, around 1957. Both the Chilili and Escabosa churches belonged to the Manzano Parish until 1973. Parishioners generally did not take part in Tijeras Canyon religious activities.

Dryland bean farming was an important source of income for the community. A bean warehouse, where the beans were thrashed, cleaned, sacked and stored still stands. Corn, peas, pumpkins and wheat also were

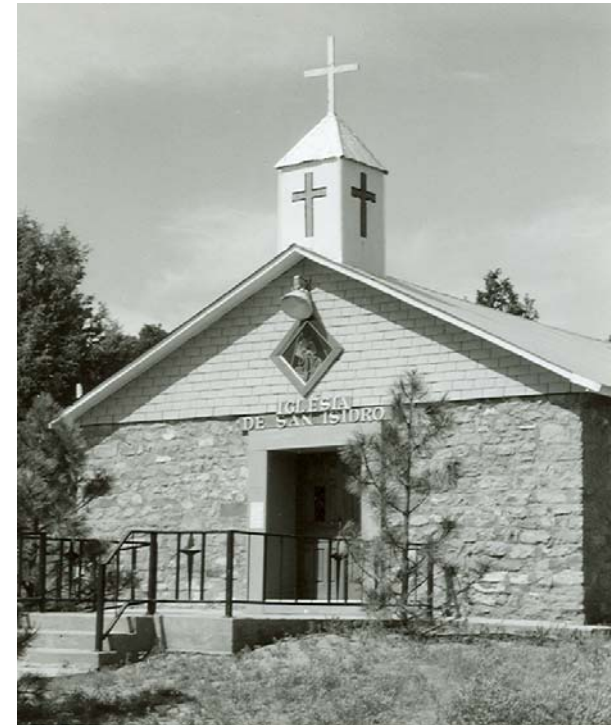
ESCABOSA

Land at Escabosa was homesteaded by a group of brothers from the Mora family in the late 19th century. The village is named “Escabosa”, Spanish for broomgrass, because villagers once supplemented their incomes by making brooms from grass that grew in the area. The home of one of the homesteaders, Filomeno Mora, is still used by his descendants. The community well was on his property; it ran dry around 1945. In the 1920s and 1930s, Filomeno had a grocery store at his home. He also, for a time, had a post office and a saloon.

The present community and dance hall was completed around 1939. The hall belongs to, and is maintained by, the Escabosa Riders – a riding group organized in 1968. A smaller hall, built of logs in 1925, had stood near the same site and was torn down. Land for the hall was donated by Filomeno Mora.

The rock Church of San Isidro Labrador was built in 1932 or 1933. Each family brought in five wagon-loads of rock to construct it. Those who built the church were experienced at building rock houses. Dances were held to raise money to pay for the lumber to roof the church. The feast of the village’s patron saint, San Isidro, is celebrated May 15.

Pinto beans and wheat formerly were grown for sale. Other crops, such as corn, peas, pumpkins and oats also were grown. Wagon loads of firewood were sold at Albuquerque and Isleta Pueblo. In the 1940s, wood was cut for cedar posts and sold in Albuquerque. Many Mora family members moved to Albuquerque because of the drought in the late 1940s, but older descendants have been moving back to their village. There was a Kuhn-owned sawmill in Escabosa from around 1920 to 1936. Some Escabosa residents worked at the mill. In the 1940s, another sawmill was built.



Church of San Isidro Labrador-Escabosa

JUAN TOMAS

The Juan Tomas church and the Juan Tomas school are about 100 years old. Annual village fiestas were held in June until the early 1960s. The patron saint was San Juan Nepomoseno. The church was sold by the Archdiocese of Santa Fe and is no longer used for Catholic services. The cemetery has several old graves in it. Some are just wooden crosses and others are marked with tombstones. The community was named for Juan Tomas, a ranch owner in 1870. Juan Tomas was a bean growing community.

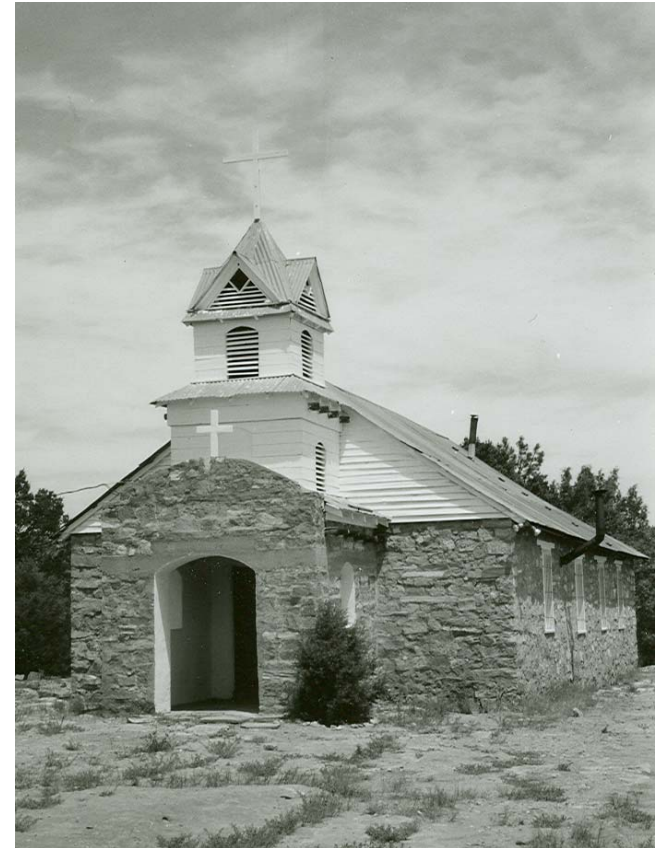
HISTORIC SITES

The following sites have been identified as having important historical value to East Mountain Area residents. This list is not meant to be complete, but an initial attempt to identify these sites, structures, and other historically significant features within the East Mountain Area.

CHURCHES

On the survey forms filled in by East Mountain residents, many emphasized that old Hispanic churches should be preserved. In addition to historic and religious significance, the churches add charm to the mountain countryside. Old Catholic churches can be found in:

- Tijeras: the old Tijeras church has been unused since the mid-70s. It is already listed on the state historic register.
- Cañoncito: dates from the 1870s. It is used primarily for the annual fiesta.
- San Antonito: uncertain date, but is believed to have been built in the 19th century. The interior has been remodeled and modernized.
- Sedillo: probably built in 1941 to replace an older church.
- Escabosa: built in 1932 or 1933.



Juan Tomas Church

- Chilili: uncertain date, but it is believed to have been built in the mid-19th century.
- Juan Tomas: sold by the Archdiocese of Santa Fe and now privately owned.
- The San Antonio and Carnuel churches are not as old, but were built on the sites of older churches.

OTHER RELIGIOUS SITES

The following are sites at which penitente observances took place have historical value.

- Essentially nothing is left of the San Antonio morada, but a sign indicating where it stood would be appropriate as it had great community importance.
- At the site of the San Antonio penitente's Calvary cross, the cross is gone, but the site seems otherwise undisturbed. From the hill, one can imagine the walk of the penitentes – one bearing a cross – up the hill and down to Bartolo Baca. There appears to be an old trail down at least one side of the hill.
- A small, former morada at Bartolo Baca is in good condition, and probably has been unaltered since it was built. It was the last morada constructed and was built after the penitentes had declined in importance, but may still have historical interest. Presently it is used for storage.
- The site of the old Chilili morada is well protected by the Chilili community. The area, with its outdoor Stations of the Cross and related “Calvary”, still is used for Lenten activities. The nearby penitente cemetery also is maintained. The community should be encouraged to preserve these sites.
- The white cross over the highway at Carnuel should be preserved as an historic site. The original cross, erected in 1932, has been replaced several times because of vandals. A sign below could perhaps describe its history.

CEMETERIES

Older cemeteries are picturesque and have historical value. Each Catholic church has an associated cemetery.

HISTORIC HOMES

Many communities have one or more homes that were built by 19th century homesteaders. Other homes are associated with an important community figure. Many of the homes, generally those in the best condition, are lived in and have been expanded and remodeled. A partial listing of historically important old homes includes the following:

- The former Charles Campos home in San Antonio was built in the 1880s and is still used as a residence.
- The 19th century house built by Ramon Herrera in Carnuel. It appears to retain architectural features of the historic home, and several generations of Herreras have lived in it. At one time the house had a dance hall and store. Herrera donated land for the old Carnuel church and acted as a church caretaker.
- The Jose Herrera home besides the Carnuel church. Two rooms were built in the 1930s and additions made later. Jose Herrera was the grandson of Ramon. He donated additional land to the church when a larger church was built. He and his family also became church caretakers and bell ringers. They provided the old chapel with electricity, water, firewood, and cleaning services.
- In the Primera Agua section of Tijeras is the home built by Manuel Gonzales (b. 1853). At least four generations of the Gonzales family have lived in the stone house. Land for the new Holy Child Church was donated by a member of the family. Descendants of Gonzales still live in the area.
- The home of Jacobo Baca is still used by his descendants as a residence in Sedillo. It has been modernized and enlarged.
- The Rider homestead in Gutierrez Canyon, in which several generations of Riders have lived, still is in good condition.
- Still standing is the home built in 1924 by Santiago Gutierrez at Bartolo Baca; but it is in poor condition. Its historical importance lies in the fact that he built and maintained the adjacent morada.
- The Griego homestead at Cedro should be preserved for its historical value. It apparently has not been altered. It is said that, at one time, one nuclear Griego family lived in each of four of the five rooms. Listing on the state historical register is sought.
- The 19th century Filomeno Mora home in Escobosa is occupied by his descendants.
- The old Kuhn homestead off of South 14 exists but is in poor condition.
- More old homes exist near 217 and Historic Route 66.

OTHER HISTORICAL STRUCTURES

- An old store, with attached home, still is open for business in Chilili. The owner of the store is descended from a family that came to Chilili before 1883. His father had earlier owned the store. Behind the store is an old bean warehouse that also has historical importance.
- Some old one and two-room schools have been converted into residences. A school house on Highway 217 was converted into a store and gas station. The old Chilili school house now is used as a garage for school buses. Its exterior has not been altered.
- Remnants of the complex San Antonio-Tijeras-Zamora water system.
- Old coal and ore mines.

ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES

According to a report by Eleanor Mitchell, there are many ancient Indian villages buried throughout Tijeras Canyon. Mitchell wrote that more than 60 such sites were known of, but only a small part of the area had been archaeologically surveyed. A state archaeological survey of Mountain Ranch (located between North 14, La Madera Road and the County line) several years ago found three or four major pre-contact pueblos, in addition to 40 or 50 other archaeological sites. Ancient Indian villages also existed at Carnuel and Chilili, as well as at Paa-ko and partially excavated sites at Tijeras and San Antonio. Although part of Tijeras pueblo is on Forest Service land, a large part is on private property. Paa-ko once was a state monument. Indian pictographs also exist in the East Mountains, some on private property.

Other sites are significant for what they can tell of 18th and 19th century Hispanic life.

TIJERAS LIME KILNS

The sites of three sets of lime kilns still exist in the Tijeras area. None are intact but the size and shape can still be seen. One set is located west of the new road into A. Montoya Elementary School. Another set still barely exists east of Tijeras. The third set is south of Sedillo. A fourth set, which no longer exists, was located at the intersection of Historic Route 66 highway and Zamora Road near Fire Station #10 and the East Mountain Sheriff's substation. These kilns appear to have been made of sandstone, shaped like a domed beehive or horno, large enough to walk into with diameters of seven to thirteen feet by estimates. Some of the stones still in place have a green glass look on the inside and some are bonded together by the intense heat of burning the limestone rock for lime.

The knowledge of lime burning was brought over from the Old World. Mortar made from lime and sand was the most common kind used in structures in the eastern part of the United States until the latter part of the nineteenth century. This type of mortar was suitable for use above the water line since it would not set in water as does our modern day cement. This type of mortar is still used in repairing historic structures as it is more suitable than our present day hard cement. The lime kilns near Tijeras were in use through the first quarter of this century.

The lime was burned by layering alternate layers of broken limestone rock and fuel wood (sometimes coal) in the kilns. The kilns were open at the top and they were located on the side of a hill to facilitate the loading of fuel and limestone from the top. Since the local kilns were predominantly wood-fired, they offered employment for the local woodcutters.

An opening at the bottom made it possible to start the dry wood fire and extract the lime, ashes, and unburned limestone. This opening could also be used to control the draft for the fire. Where two kilns were located together, they would be loaded and burned at the same time, rather than alternating kilns as one would imagine would be done for efficiency.

Burning of the filled kilns took about two days and nights and an equal amount of cooling time before they could be emptied. The heating of the limestone rock to about 1650 degrees Fahrenheit caused carbon oxide to be given off, leaving a residue of calcium dioxide called quicklime. This quicklime was loaded onto wagon trains and transported to Albuquerque. Here they would cover it for shipment. It would take several wagons to haul the quicklime from one kiln because it was quite heavy.

The quicklime that came out of the kiln looked much like the limestone that went in, but when the proper amount of water was added, the quicklime was changed to slaked or hydrated lime, and in the process, heat was given off and the quicklime became pulverized. Slaked lime is a powder whose volume is from one and one-half to three and one-half times the volume of the quicklime from which it was made. This was the common mortar-making material of the day. It was also used to soak the hull or bran off shelled corn to make posole.